GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4139
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005
INCREASE IN NUMBER OF MOBILE PHONE USERS
Mistry Shri Madhusudan Devram

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether mobile phones in the country have registered huge growth during the last two years;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for growth of wireless fixed line phones which are more affordable to the masses;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether significant number of BSNL and MTNL subscribers have shifted to Mobile Phones during the last one year; and

(f) if so, the initiatives taken or proposed to be taken by the TRAI, DOT, BSNL and private operators to promote the use of fixed phones?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The total number of mobile subscribers in March 2005 stands at four times the total number in March 2003 as per the figures given below:

March 2003	March 2004	March 2005
13 million	33.58 million	52.17 million

(c) There is no distinction between Fixed Wireless and land line phones in rural area. Landline connections including fixed wireless connections in rural areas, in so far as tariff is concerned, get support from Universal Service Obligation Fund.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

(e) There is churning of subscribers from fixed lines to mobiles due to flexibility of mobile phones and multiplicity of fixed line connections in many households in urban areas and around 3% fixed line phones have been surrendered.

(f) The major initiatives taken/proposed to be taken to promote the use of fixed phones by BSNL/MTNL are as follows:

i) Special promotional schemes like free registration in `on demand area` free installation etc. have been introduced from time to time for fixed line customers.

ii) Launch of Broadband services at very attractive tariffs for land line subscribers.

iii) Provision of `phone plus services` free of cost to landline customers.